

# SB 191: MONTANA SEPTIC DISCLOSURE ACT

## Protecting water quality and private property.

### *What is it?*

- >> This bill is similar to the radon or mold disclosure acts passed by previous Montana Legislatures.
- >> It protects property buyers purchasing land with a septic system (individual on-site sewage treatment) by ensuring the buyer receives any available permits, maintenance records, and other information related to the septic system before purchasing the property.
- >> It protects property sellers and seller's agents by relieving them of liability for future problems with the septic system, provided they give the buyer all available information.

### *Why do we need it?*

- >> In the past two decades, 3 out of 4 new lots were created with individual septic systems. Over 80,000 lots have been created with septic systems since 1990.
- >> One-third of all Montanans use decentralized wastewater treatment, the majority of which are septic systems. Many of these sewage collection systems are aging, in disrepair, or in need of maintenance.
- >> Poorly maintained septic systems can leak harmful bacteria and other pollution into groundwater, which can negatively impact neighboring water wells, streams, or property value.
- >> Septic systems need routine maintenance (like pumping) to protect property from costly septic backups or flooding, and to protect public health and safety from water quality, pollution.
- >> Currently, sellers are not required to provide any information about the septic system on a given property, leaving many buyers unaware if the systems they purchase are permitted or properly maintained.

### *Questions?*

- >> Brianna Randall at 406.370.5289 or [brianna@clarkfork.org](mailto:brianna@clarkfork.org)